

# Birchtree Friday Update

Birchtree Charter School 7107 E. Palmer Wasilla Hwy. Palmer, AK



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## IN RETROSPECT

Several times over the course of this school year, I have recalled the very first day of my Waldorf teacher training at Antioch New England Graduate School. All 24 of us credential-seeking candidates were seated in a circle, as our speech teacher slipped something to one of us saying, "This is a gift for you." He instructed us to receive the gift from the person to our left and to give it to the neighbor to our right. The gift was a rock, one that he had doubtlessly picked up on his way into the room.

I distinctly remember thinking that I didn't get it. In fact, I held it of so little significance that I forgot about it for many years. Until just recently. I was observing a lower grades class. After having heard a story, the children were handing out materials for main lesson seat work. Some children placed crayons and books on desks carefully, while others tossed and slid them to their classmates. Inside, I was crying out, "These are gifts! They ought to be handled with care!" That's the moment I remembered the rock. "I get it!", I thought.

It wasn't about the rock. We teacher candidates were learning how to give and how to receive. We were learning, in essence, about gratitude and thankfulness. Waldorf journeys all begin that way: in giving. Paths are cleared by visionaries who found schools. An inordinate amount of work goes into manifesting these visions. Buildings are erected, school supplies are ordered, and teachers are trained. Waldorf educators continually strive to give and to receive the highest quality education. The work is endless, as is the joy.

What emerged from the ring of teacher candidates on my first day of Waldorf training was much more profound than what lay on the surface. We learned to acknowledge even the smallest of acts--the giving of a dull rock--as a gift. This is the season when I realize how many small acts have gone into the school year. How many lessons have been prepared; how many songs sung; how many stories told and verses recited; how many lunches packed; how many clothes laundered; how many heads of hair combed and brushed; how many trips to school driven; how many stitches knitted, crocheted, crossed, or sewn; how many soups prepared and dishes washed; how many painting papers prepared; how many meetings attended; how many instruments carted; and how many hours volunteered. For these, and the endless list of other gifts, I heartily give thanks.

On behalf of the entire staff, I extend complete gratitude to you, parents, for entrusting your children to us at Birchtree (T for thankfulness). I give thanks to my colleagues for receiving the children in love. And lastly, I thank all the children at our school who, in their own ways, teach us all.

Here's to a safe and joyous summer!

-Donna Levesque

Pedagogical Dean

## Save This Date

May 15th: 5th Grade camp out at the Reindeer farm in the Butte.

May 15th: 8th Grade promotion at Mat-Su Senior Center 6 PM

May 18th: Medieval Games (6th grade) and the end of the year Picnic

**May 18th: Last day of school for students. Enjoy your summer break!!**

**August 4th: On site registration 12 - 4 PM**

**August 5th: On site registration 8 AM-12 PM**

**August 6th: On site registration 4-8 PM**

**August 14th : Back to school Picnic**

**August 17th: School starts for grades 2-8th**

**August 24th: School starts for kindergarten and 1st grade.**

*I overlook mistakes.*

*I free myself from pain and resentment. I am willing to heal the past. I find it in my heart to give others another chance. I use guilt only as a signal for change.*



## Reminders

Please pay Second Semester Supply fees. You may check at the Front Office if you are unsure if you owe. The supply fees are due prior to returning for the 2015/2016 school year. If you are incurring a financial hardship, please ask at the Front Office for a Supply Fee Scholarship.

On site registration will be happening on August 4, 5 and 6. Please check the Save the date section for more details.

School starts on August 17th for grades 2-8. Kindergarten will have roll in the first week and will begin classes on Monday August 24th.

Back to school open house will be on Friday August 14th.

Congratulations to our 2015  
8th grade class



Mr. Phelps' first grade class after nearly filling 4 trash bags with litter from the school grounds and the surrounding woods. They were so proud of themselves for helping out and most of them thought it was great fun!

## Lost and Found

The office has a violin that was turned in. If you are missing yours please come see Ms. Beth.

### Gratitude's and Expressions.

I would like to bestow a sincere thank you to Heather Lee and Barb Andrist for taking the lead coaching position for track this year. We are so grateful for your time and dedication. – Mrs. Jones

Thank you to all of my parents for their continuous efforts in support of our 6<sup>th</sup> grade class. – Mrs. Jones

Thank you to Mrs. Vander Shrier for all the organization of the Pentathlon. Also big thanks to all the parents that prepared food and took the day off to watch their children participate. It was a beautiful day and all our 5th graders did their best.

A special thanks to Lynna Fernandes for helping me cut, organize and plan a quilt for our 5th grade class.

Thank you to all of my class parents. I have learned so much, grown in my teaching and truly enjoyed this 5 year journey with this class. Thank you for supporting me and the class in so many ways, I appreciate it.

Thank you so much Mr. Phelps, for teaching the students, by example, to have reverence for nature, respect for earth and her resources, and the satisfaction of service and a job well done! The trash was really piling up!

Thank you Mr. Auld for being the driving force and the backbone of this years 7th grade rummage sale!



Birchtree End of the Year Picnic

# Birchtree Pentathlon

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade Pentathlon last Thursday went off seamlessly. The weather was perfect, the athletes performed wholeheartedly and the food was delicious. Mrs. Vander Schrier would like to give a big thank you to Steven Merritt for being so dedicated to helping with the Pentathlon. Thank you for passing out the City State gear, collecting and washing the sweatshirts and pants, attending meetings, emailing all the parents the past month, and helping transport items down to Goose Lake in Anchorage. Your help was greatly appreciated. Mrs. Vander Schrier would also like to thank Kirstin Gerrish for making 25 laurels for all the pentathletes. Another big thank you to Danielle Terry for making all the tunics, supporting/ guiding the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in embroidering their tunics, and ironing them. And finally, we would also like to celebrate that our very own Regin Dervaes was Hera for the day.



# May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
10	11 Mr. Clarks Class Play 4:00 PM Mr. Danz's Class bike ride after school Day 2	12 Mrs. Johndro's class play 5:30 PM Day 3	13 APC Meeting 6-8 BPG Meeting 3:45 Hill, Phelps and Albina Clss plays Day 1	14 7th and 8th grade Promo- tion practice 3 PM palmer senior center Mrs. Trans Class Play5:PM 7th Grade Shakespear night 5:30 PM Early Release	15 8th Grade Promotion at Palmer Senior center at 6PM 5th grade Camp out at the Rendeer Farm Day 3	16
17	18 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL School Wide Picnic Day 1	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13